



## **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM**

**Issued by**

**The Economic Development Corporation**

**Office of Jobs and Community Services**

**ISSUE DATE:**        **March 30, 2009**

**CLOSING DATE:**    **April 17, 2009**

**Responses must be delivered by 4:00 p.m. to**

**43 Hawkins Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Boston, MA**

**Inquiries:**        **Larry Smith**

**Telephone: (617) 918-5262**

**Email: [Larry.Smith.JCS@cityofboston.gov](mailto:Larry.Smith.JCS@cityofboston.gov)**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

The Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS) is the City of Boston's workforce development agency. JCS receives funding from the US Department of Labor, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and other sources for adult education, job training, and youth employment services, and will administer the workforce development portion of Boston's Stimulus Plan funding. This Request for Qualifications is for providers of Summer Jobs programs.

## **II. PURPOSE AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS**

Through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ), JCS seeks to identify one or more providers qualified to manage Summer Jobs programming for the summer of 2009. JCS will use the results of this RFQ to distribute City summer jobs funds, Commonwealth of Massachusetts YouthWorks funds, and federal summer jobs funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The programs funded will be subject to monitoring for operations in compliance with contract terms and conditions. JCS reserves the right to withhold contract payments in the event of non-compliance or under-performance. An RFQ is not a Request for Proposals. Responses must document the organization's *qualifications* to run a summer jobs program. We seek providers with demonstrated experience in providing summer jobs for youth. The selected organizations must conduct recruitment and intake; determine eligibility; input data regarding participants; solicit summer employment opportunities from community-based organizations, non-profits, public agencies or private business; monitor the placements to ensure success; provide work-readiness activities; and report to funding sources on participant outcomes. Providers will be responsible for payroll services, including all associated federal and state wage reporting.

## **III. SERVICES REQUESTED**

The selected providers will manage and provide payroll services for the summer jobs program. In addition to providing employment and supervision to participating youth, summer jobs providers must also document work-readiness outcomes. JCS seeks to provide youth in need of summer employment with jobs at community-based organizations, non-profits, public agencies, and private businesses in need of summer help. **(For information about how to serve as a summer job site, contact Larry Smith at [larry.smith.jcs@cityofboston.gov](mailto:larry.smith.jcs@cityofboston.gov); it is not necessary respond to this RFQ to become a summer job site.)**

Agencies must be qualified to fulfill the following specific program requirements:

1. Recruitment of youth;
2. Development of positions at community-based organizations, non-profits, public agencies and/or private businesses;
3. Use of a modified MA Work-Based Learning Plan, including assessment of participants at the start of, during, and at completion of summer employment;
4. Job placement either within their own agency or at community-based organizations, non-profits, public agencies and/or private businesses;
5. Monitoring/supervision of youth;
6. Provision of work readiness activities.

Emphasis should be placed on improving critical thinking, problem-solving, interpersonal and team building skills in the context of job-readiness. Young people must understand the applicability of their work experience so they will be better prepared to meet and adapt to the demands of the workplace in the future. Work assignments should reflect the students' interests when possible and feature project-based learning to demonstrate the relevance of skills. Applicants must demonstrate they are qualified to carry out a scope of work consisting of the following components: recruitment, assessment, eligibility determination/documentation; data input; employment and supervision; work readiness skill development; and reporting to the funder.

### **1. Recruitment**

An understanding of the population to be served is essential in order to recruit youth eligible for these services. Appropriate youth can be identified via the city's public and subsidized housing developments, community based multi-service agencies, community development corporations, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, and economic assistance programs. Applicants must demonstrate the capability of executing a comprehensive recruitment strategy, and must be able to pursue a variety of outreach plans and strategies in order to be effective in reaching the population. As part of intake, programs should use an appropriate application form such as the version attached to this RFQ. Respondents planning to use their own application should include a copy with their response. In anticipation of local, state and federal funds for summer jobs, some outreach efforts have already begun, and selected organizations will be responsible for taking referrals of youth already determined to be eligible.

### **2. Assessment**

In order to ensure youth are successful and receive adequate services, a thorough assessment of the youth's competencies is necessary. Selected organizations will be expected to utilize some version of the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan. Assessments must be signed and dated by the appropriate staff person or worksite

supervisor. Staff expertise in areas relevant to the target population will add particular value to the assessment process.

Termination policies administered by contractors will need to be clearly defined and publicized in writing. Termination policies must be consistent; due process must be upheld for all participants. All policies regarding attendance and code of conduct must be discussed with and signed by youth at the time of the initial assessment.

### **3. Employment and Supervision**

Respondents to this RFQ should be capable of providing employment opportunities with the supervision necessary for a safe and educational work experience. Youth receiving employment through this program must earn the same wages as youth in your organization's other publicly-funded summer jobs program, or youth in other publicly-funded summer jobs programs in Boston who are employed in comparable jobs. Students must earn at least \$8.00/hour. JCS will fund 20-25 hours per student per week for 7 weeks.

Summer jobs providers must offer meaningful jobs. Work is meaningful when it reinforces work readiness skills like attendance, punctuality, leadership, carrying out responsibility, completing tasks, and recognizing quality performance. Best efforts must be made to place students in jobs which reflect their interests. Supervisors should be instructive and supportive, providing a mentoring relationship which enhances the learning experience.

Supervisors must be available to answer the youth's questions pertaining to his/her job. Additionally, they must plan on meeting with the youth once per week, either individually or in a group, to discuss accomplishments and challenges. Employee assessments and progress should be documented in accordance with the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (MWBLP).

Selected Summer Jobs Program providers must reach out to community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, public agencies, or private businesses capable of serving as job sites. Programs must provide safe environments for all participants, and adhere to all Child Labor Laws. Project staff will be required to provide assistance to youth in obtaining address documentation, work permits, education certificates, and medical examinations.

### **4. Work Readiness Activities**

One of the main goals of this program is to ensure that youth have access not only to an income, but also to valuable skills that can help them gain and manage future employment. Such skills might include resume preparation and financial management.

Selected providers must assist youth to develop their life skills, either through workplace-based learning or workshops. Such skills include attendance, punctuality, relating to supervisors, appropriate workplace behavior and dress, leadership, carrying out responsibility, completing tasks, and recognizing quality performance.

**Expected outcomes for each participant in the Summer Jobs Program:**

- Completion of 7 weeks of summer employment
- Income of \$8.00 per hour
- Increased skills as assessed by a modified Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan

**IV. ELIGIBLE RESPONDENTS**

Eligible respondents must have demonstrated prior experience administering a Summer Jobs program. Respondents must have the ability to provide summer employment opportunities for participants at community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, public agencies and/or private businesses. Respondents must be able to provide required program components, as outlined above.

**V. PROGRAM MONITORING/REPORTING**

The Office of Jobs and Community Services will conduct site visits to monitor for:

- Operations in accordance with application and contract;
- Achievement of objectives;
- Integrity of administrative systems and eligibility determination; and
- Quality assessment through observation and informal interviews.

These monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities and operations. Staff interviewed should be prepared to discuss how the program is delivering the work based learning experiences discussed in this RFQ.

Student files must contain the following:

- copy of the student's application (see attached suggestion)
- appropriate working papers (work permit or education certificate)
- all assessments, pre and post program
- record of attendance and documentation of work based learning activities where appropriate (workshop or activity attendance record, etc.)

Please note that any participants coming into contact with children or elders in their employment must have a CORI/SORI check, pursuant to Massachusetts state law. Certain types of CORI/SORI issues will prevent youth from holding certain jobs.

## **VI. SCHEDULE AND DECISION PROCESS**

Responses to this RFQ must be received by JCS **no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 17, 2009**. JCS is located at 43 Hawkins Street, Boston, 02114. Late proposals will not be accepted. Faxed or e-mailed applications will not be considered. We strongly encourage applicants to deliver their applications in person.

### ***IMPORTANT NOTICE***

Your response should answer, in the space provided, the questions laid out in the section of this RFQ titled Narrative Portion Requirements. It is important to follow the instructions carefully. Once submitted, applications cannot be altered in any way.

If you have any questions or need clarification of the application instructions, please do not hesitate to contact Larry Smith at [larry.smith.jcs@cityofboston.gov](mailto:larry.smith.jcs@cityofboston.gov).

A panel of reviewers will score and rank applications on the basis of:

- Responsiveness to the Request for Qualifications;
- Bidders' qualifications and experience in providing the requested services;

JCS will review the results and make funding recommendations to the Mayor and the Workforce Investment Board. Funding decisions will be announced at the end of April. A respondent who wishes to appeal the funding decision must submit a written request stating their reasons.

### **Reservation of Rights**

JCS reserves the following rights:

- To make any funding decisions it deems necessary to accomplish the City's goals.
- To reject any or all proposals received, or to seek other solutions through a different RFQ or through the re-issuance of this RFQ.
- To refund successful respondents in subsequent contract periods subject to a review of previous performance.

## **VII. AWARD PAYMENT**

Agencies receiving an award will enter into a written agreement, as appropriate, with the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation of Boston, Inc. on behalf of its Office of Jobs and Community Services.

## VIII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. The original Application Package must be submitted with 4 copies.
2. All attachments are required at the time of submission.
3. Narrative portion **may not exceed the space allowed (5 single-spaced pages excluding attachments)**.
4. All text must be typed in a minimum 12-point font (this size).
5. Application must be submitted with all the attachments requested in the RFQ, and must provide the information exactly as listed.
6. Facsimiles and E-mailed applications will **not** be accepted.

The Application Cover Sheet must show on the outside of the Application.

**Application Cover Sheet**

Name of Agency\_\_\_\_\_

Agency Director\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Program\_\_\_\_\_

Program Director\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone\_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_\_



## **Request for Qualifications: Narrative Questions**

1. What youth programs has your organization managed? Describe your organization's experience providing youth employment services. Discuss your prior specific experience operating a Summer Jobs program, including the size and nature of that program (number of participants; number of staff; cost-per-participant; number of job sites; etc).

## **Request for Qualifications: Narrative Questions**

2. How do you currently recruit youth for your program(s)? Do you have a policy and process for CORI/SORI checks? How do you ensure that all necessary documents (working papers, education certificates, CORI/SORI, income verification, residency verification, medical information) are obtained *prior* to participant start date? *Attach your Summer Jobs Application Form.*

## **Request for Qualifications: Narrative Questions**

3. How do you assess participants for your program(s)? Do you use the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan? What concrete procedures (tests, interviews, interest assessments, etc.) are used to determine whether the youth and the job are an appropriate match? Who is responsible for documenting these procedures? Discuss your experience with income verification, eligibility determination, data inputting, and outcome reporting.

## **Request for Qualifications: Narrative Questions**

4. Describe the types of jobs you offer youth. What opportunities exist for exposure to technology? How has the program addressed barriers such as limited English skills? Discuss the School-to-Career programming and activities used in the past. How do you ensure the youth are appropriately and safely supervised? Describe the ratio and interaction between youth and supervisors. Does a counselor/coordinator oversee the program?

## **Request for Qualifications: Narrative Questions**

5. Describe your program's work readiness and life skills activities. Are participants exposed to the concepts of work readiness through their jobs or through other means? Discuss staff qualifications for delivering training this component. Explain the staff reporting structure and attach a program organizational chart. Indicate whether positions are full-time or part-time. *Attach a job description and a resume for each direct service and program management position involved in the program.* Label the job description with the name of the staff person, or indicate if the position is vacant. Label the resume with the current job title for the staff person.